

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7245

S E C R E T PORT AU PRINCE 2001

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, HA

SUBJECT: TRAINING FOR HAITIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE U.S.

REF: (A) STATE 214666; (B) P-AU-P A-125; (C) FY 74-75 CASP FOR HAITI

1. MILITARY TRAINING COURSES WHICH COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE GOH ON A CASH SALES BASIS THIS YEAR, PER REF (A), TRANSMITTED TO SECSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS NOVEMBER 12.

2. EMBASSY APPRECIATES DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO THIS REQUEST, AND WE BELIEVE LIST OF COURSES IS A GOOD ONE TO MEET INITIAL, MOST BASIC NEEDS OF HAITIAN ARMED FORCES, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELDS OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR. HOWEVER, EMBASSY STILL BELIEVES, AND STRONGLY URGES, THAT TRAINING BE PROVIDED ON A GRANT BASIS, AS REQUESTED IN THE FY 74-75 CASP FOR HAITI AND APPROVED BY THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GROUP FOR LATIN AMERICA IN APRIL 1973.

3. EMBASSY CAN UNDERSTAND HAITI'S EXCLUSION FROM THE LIST OF COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT MILITARY TRAINING IN THE 1960'S, OWING TO POLITICAL CONDITIONS PREVAILING AT THAT TIME. HOWEVER, TIMES IN HAITI HAVE CHANGED. THE COUNTRY HAS A NEW, YOUNG PRESIDENT MOVING IN SOME POSITIVE NEW DIRECTIONS. (SEE EMBASSY'S A-137 OF 10-5-73). IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, REPRESSION HAS BEEN MARKEDLY AND GENUINELY EASED IN HAITI, FOR EXAMPLE, IN CONTRAST TO THE DIRECTION OF EVENTS IN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE HEMISPHERE. EVEN AFTER THE KIDNAPPING

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OF AMBASSADOR KNOX EARLIER THIS YEAR AND AFTER THE FIRES IN

THE NATIONAL PALACE IN JULY AND AUGUST (ALL HIGHLY EMBARRASSING TO THE REGIME), THE GOH MAINTAINED ITS POLITICAL RESTRAINT. THERE HAS BEEN NO REPRESSIVE CRACKDOWN. MOREOVER, IN THE MAJOR PERSONNEL SHAKEUP OF AUGUST, THE PRESIDENT DISMISSED A NUMBER OF THE MORE CORRUPT AND SELF-SERVING CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS INHERITED FROM THE PAST AND REPLACED THEM MAINLY WITH PROFESSIONALS AND YOUNGER TECHNOCRATS OF GOOD REPUTATION. HE HAS ALSO SHOWN A CLEAR DESIRE TO DO MORE FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. AND, IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN HAITI HAS BEEN A DEPENDABLE, GOOD FRIEND OF THE U.S., FOR WHATEVER THAT IS WORTH. ALL THESE ARE POSITIVE TENDENCIES WHICH IT SEEMS TO US SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

4. IN THE FY 1974-75 CASP FOR HAITI, THE EMBASSY OUTLINED A NUMBER OF OTHER POINTS DEMONSTRATING WHY WE BELIEVE SOME GRANT MILITARY TRAINING FOR HAITI IS VERY MUCH IN OUR INTERESTS: THE URGENT NEED TO UPGRADE THE HAITIAN NAVY'S VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT COASTAL PARTOLLING AND MARINE SAFETY CAPABILITY; THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH SOME INFLUENCE WITH THE WHOLE GENERATION OF YOUNGER HAITIAN MILITARY OFFICERS WHO KNOW NOTHING OF THE U.S.; AND OTHERS. IN VIEW OF THE MOUNTING DRUG TRAFFIC PROBLEM IN THE CARIBBEAN, THE NEED FOR GRANT NAVAL TRAINING IS ESPECIALLY WORTH STRESSING. BY ANY YARD-STICK HAITI IS THE POOREST COUNTRY IN THE HEMISPHERE, WITH BUDGETED REVENUES AMOUNTING TO A TOTAL OF ONLY SOME \$48 MILLION THIS YEAR. FROM THESE SLENDER RESOURCES THE GOH MUST RUN ALL OF ITS GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND FUND ITS OWN CONTRIBUTION TO ITS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. TO THE GOH, NAVAL TRAINING OF THE SORT REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE ANTI-SMUGGLING AND COASTAL PATROL CAPABILITY IS DESIRABLE, BUT NOT SO ESSENTIAL AS TO TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER OTHER DEMANDS ON ITS EXTREMELY LIMITED RESOURCES. THE GOH IS ALREADY PAYING IN CASH, AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE TO DO SO, FOR ALL ACQUISITIONS OF MILITARY MATERIEL.

5. IN SUM, IT SEEMS ILLOGICAL THAT HAITI, THE POOREST COUNTRY IN THE HEMISPHERE, TRYING TO MOVE IN SOME POSITIVE NEW DIRECTIONS, AND WITH PERHAPS THE GREATEST NEED FOR OUR HELP, SHOULD STILL BE SINGLED OUT FOR TOTAL EXCLUSION FROM GRANT

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TRAINING PROGRAMS ENJOYED BY NEARLY EVERY OTHER NATION OF THE HEMISPHERE FOR MANY YEARS -- TRAINING WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO ADVANCING A NUMBER OF OUR IMPORTANT INTERESTS, IN THE REGION, AS SET FORTH IN OUR CASP.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY AGAIN REQUESTS DEPARTMENT'S FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF OUR RECOMMENDATION, OUTLINED IN THE CASP AND APPROVED BY THE IG, FOR A GRANT TRAINING PROGRAM

FOR A FEW DOZEN HAITIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE U.S.,
CONCENTRATING ON NAVAL PERSONNEL, THE COST FOR THIS FY TO BE
NO MORE THAN THE \$155,000 REQUESTED IN THE CASP (PPS. 21, 37).
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